

UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD  
COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
9 OCTOBER 2014

Present: Baroness Beverley Hughes (Chair), Derek Antrobus, Martin Bull, Mike Burrows, Garry Dowdle, Jill Evans, Julia Fawcett, Martin Hall, Amina Helal, Fiza Ikram, Jane Luca, Claire Moreland, Gai Murphy, Sean O'Hara, Jasmine Pokuaa, Joyce Redfearn and Tom Russell

Apologies: Alun Francis, Eric Healey, Stephen Sorrell and Ruth Turner

In attendance: Vikki Goddard (Registrar), Helen Marshall (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Julie Charge (Associate Director of Finance), Mark Rollinson (University Secretary) and Stephen Talboys (Executive Director of Estates and Property Services – item COU.14.66 only)

COU.14.57 **OPENING REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed Garry Dowdle, Jill Evans and Sean O'Hara to their first meeting as members and noted that this would be Gai Murphy's final meeting as she was leaving the University to take up a position at the University of Central Lancashire. Council thanked Gai for her contribution to the work of the University and Council. The Chair also congratulated Julie Charge on her recent appointment as Director of Finance.

COU.14.58 **MEMBERSHIP (COU/14/53)**

Council **noted** the list of Council members in 2014-15.

COU.14.59 **MINUTES (COU/14/54)**

Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2014 and noted that, in future, minutes would be produced in a more concise format

COU.14.60 **CHAIR'S ACTION**

1. Strategic Lead and Property Transactions (COU/14/55)

Council **noted** that the Chair of Council had approved the transactions listed in the document and that the Director of Estates and Property Services and the Interim Director of Finance had been given delegated authority to progress to exchange and complete on behalf of the University.

Councillor Antrobus declared an interest in this item.

2. Audit Committee

Council **noted** that, following a recommendation for the Nominations and Governance Committee, the Chair agreed that the constitution of the Audit Committee be amended to allow the appointment of an additional co-opted member with recent experience in finance, accounting and auditing.

COU.14.61 **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (COU/14/56)**

Council **considered** the Quarter 4 Performance Report; the Vice-Chancellor highlighted key updates as set out on page 4 of the report. The following was **noted** in discussion:

a) Academic Improvement

1. Council expressed its disappointment with the latest NSS and League Table outcomes;

2. whilst there were pockets of excellent performance (notably in Salford Business School), Council was seeking assurance of improvement and accountability for such improvement going forward;
3. that removal of the College layer and realignment of student facing elements of professional services would provide greater clarity in terms of reporting lines and clear lines of accountability for performance;
4. that, in order to assess in-year performance, bespoke questionnaires would be used with increased emphasis on measures to understand and respond to the student voice;
5. that, notwithstanding the above, there was likely to be a lag in turning round NSS and League Table performance given that NSS was completed by final year undergraduate students.

Council **resolved** that letters of congratulation from the Chair of Council be sent to those programmes where NSS overall satisfaction scores had significantly exceeded national benchmarks.

**ACTION: Secretary (AP1)**

b) Academic Growth and Diversification

1. latest recruitment data showed that the home/EU undergraduate target was very close to achievement (4,074 against 4,079 target) and all Colleges had exceeded target except Arts and Media; Home/EU postgraduate taught recruitment was also very close to target (440 against 448 target), whilst international undergraduate and postgraduate taught recruitment was below target (290 against 334 target and 325 against 447 target respectively);
2. that, whilst the underperformance in relation to international recruitment was partly explained by the current visa regime, there was scope for improvement in converting applications to registrations and this was being investigated further.

c) Research and Enterprise

1. the report highlighted a significant decline in research income since 2010/11 and Council, noting the interdependency of high quality teaching and research, was seeking assurance of measures to improve performance in this area;
2. that the Research Strategy would shortly be presented to Council and would emphasise the importance of the 2020 REF return and growth in income supported by a policy of recruiting academic staff with a good research track record or potential.

It was **resolved** that Council be provided with more detail about current research bidding activity, including collaborative bids to assist in gauging progress in this area.

**ACTION: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (AP2)**

d) International Priorities

1. the importance of clarity about international hub financial contribution to enable Council to evaluate the success of the initiative;
2. that the Budget Review Group meeting on 3 November would receive an update on the Abu Dhabi hub and a business case for reprioritisation of implementation of the hubs.

e) Institutional Sustainability

the importance of cultural change and engendering a sense of shared ownership for delivery of improvements

f) Key University Initiatives

the contribution of the Students' Union to the Registration, Welcome and Induction project should be appropriately acknowledged.

**COU.14.62 FINANCIAL REPORT AND UPDATE (COU/14/57)**

Council **considered** the Quarter Four financial report and update, highlighting achievement of the historical cost surplus of £8.5 million.

Council's appreciation of the consistent accuracy of the financial forecast throughout 2013-14 was noted.

**COU.14.63 SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES (COU/14/58)**

Council **noted** the quarterly report on progress and activities of University of Salford Enterprises and subsidiary companies, including changes to group company structure.

**COU.14.64 COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW (COU/14/59)**

Council **considered** a report setting out the outcomes of the Council Effectiveness Review Task Group following consideration by the Council conference on 18 September 2014.

Council **resolved**:

1. that officers in attendance at Council meetings should be; Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Director of Finance and Secretary. Other officers to attend for specific agenda items;
2. the establishment of two new Committees, Finance and Resources Committee and Student Experience, and dissolution of two existing Council boards, Council Advisory Group and Budget Review Group; and the redesignation of Audit Committee as Audit and Risk Committee;
3. that work to confirm membership, terms of reference and meeting dates should be prioritised;
4. that Lead Members for resource areas (HR, IT, Estates) should become members of Finance and Resources Committee;
5. meetings between Lead Members and Directors should continue but without formal minutes; assurance from Lead Members would be sought through Finance and Resources Committee;
6. that the Vice-Chancellor attend the November Audit Committee as a minimum and other meetings of the Committee by invitation;
7. the establishment of annual review meetings between the Chair and members (with Deputy Chair seeking views on the Chair) with a framework for the review to be developed by the Secretary;
8. that meetings should begin at 2:00pm with a maximum three hours duration (with agendas to include allocation of time for specific items) and that the pre-meeting informal lunch be retained;
9. that the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment be used as the information repository for Council; hard copies of agendas to be retained for the time being, with members having the option to remove themselves from hard copy receipt;
10. that outstanding matters, including revisions to the Statement of Primary Responsibilities and to Committee Terms of Reference, be discussed at a final meeting of the Task Group and then circulated to members for final comment and approval.

**ACTION: Secretary (AP3)**

It was **noted** in discussion:

1. that the Student Experience Committee would provide high level assurance that the student experience was optimal and would avoid involving itself in matters of detail which were the responsibility of Senate (noting that the role of Senate and supporting academic governance framework, including at School level, was under review);
2. that the new body would operate as a committee of Council with Senate membership (including Students' Union membership).

#### COU.14.65 **BRIEFING ON PENSIONS AND PAY (COU/14/60)**

Council **considered** a briefing on current pay and pensions pressures and the eleven point plan to ensure achievement of the 52% pay to income ratio target from 2014-15, as set out in the report and the following was noted in discussion:

1. the importance of workforce planning for each School in ensuring the appropriate establishment level and balance between positions and avoiding detrimental impact on academic quality and research outputs;
2. the need for Senior Lecturer and Professorial promotions rounds to be aligned with the workforce requirements within Schools;
3. the focus on recruiting academic staff with developing research profiles to enhance teaching and learning and improve the success rate of research bids;
4. acknowledgement that academic vacancies was not a sustainable long term method of cost saving
5. planned significant reduction of hourly paid staff with significant teaching quality and financial benefits;
6. the importance of developing a culture of continuous improvement and confronting inadequate or sub-standard performance if the 52% ratio were to be achieved.

It was **resolved** that Council support for the measures outlined in the Plan be confirmed and a further progress report be made to the February 2015 meeting.

**ACTION: Director of Finance (AP4)**

#### COU.14.66 **CHANGES TO ESTATES PLAN FOLLOWING PREVIOUS MEETING (COU/14/61)**

Council **considered** a report and supporting presentation highlighting changes made to the Estates Plan following comments from Council at the previous meeting with the following noted in discussion:

1. the detailed plan for cost reduction and disposal of some sites (including the need for contingency space for emergency response/decanting), noting that the opening of the Gateway Building (currently planned for January 2016) was a key dependency;
2. the scope for potential further future development of the Plan (e.g. to appropriately reference the emerging IT Strategy, optimise use of buildings with poorest utilisation rates);
3. the scope for increased external utilisation of teaching space outside core teaching time;
4. the latest position in relation to the Environment Agency Scheme to create flood defences at Castle Irwell and a related proposal to use David Lewis Playing Fields for University sports provision (formal approval for the scheme would be sought at the November meeting).

Council **resolved** that the report be approved and, accordingly, the revised Estates Plan (available to members as a background paper) be confirmed.

**ACTION: Director of Estates (AP5)**

#### COU.14.67 **NAMING THE UNIVERSITY ESTATE (COU/14/62)**

Council **considered** a report setting out proposals for naming parts of the University Estate.

Council **resolved**:

1. that the Naming Guidance Statement be approved and the University Policy on Naming the University Estate be updated accordingly.
2. that the name of the new residence development be 'Riverside Quarter'
3. that each of the seven blocks in the Phase 1 residence development be named, as listed in the document (i.e. Pankhurst, Ranulf, Lowry, Radclyffe, Delaney, Daber and Unsworth) and that the stories behind each name be recorded within the entrance to each block and on the University website.
4. that the building currently known as Acton Square be named 'Alumni House.'
5. that the room in the Old Fire Station currently referred to as the conservatory be named the Albert Adams Room.

**ACTION: Director of Advancement/Director of Estates AP6)**

**COU.14.68 DISESTABLISHMENT OF COLLEGE LAYER (COU/14/63)**

Council **considered** a report proposing the disestablishment of the College layer of management and governance and the following was **noted** in discussion:

1. that there had been extensive consultation with affected parties including the Students' Union;
2. that, whilst the consequent managerial changes could begin to be implemented immediately (Heads of School reporting to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, for example), consequent academic governance changes would be introduced from August 2015;
3. that introduction of the academic governance changes from August 2015 would enable due account to be taken of the review of Senate and its committees (including, for example, student representation at School level);
4. that, in a parallel and related development, the new Directorate of Student and Academic Support was in the process of being established.

Council **resolved** that the College layer of management and governance be disestablished (with the former implemented on an incremental basis with immediate effect and the latter implemented with effect from August 2015).

**COU.14.69 REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE (COU/14/64)**

Council **considered** the report from the Audit Committee meeting held on 16 September 2014 and the following was noted in discussion:

1. that the Health and Safety Annual Report had been considered following the July Council meeting and that the next Annual Report would be brought forward for earlier consideration at Council level.
2. that the Chair of Audit Committee and the Registrar had met recently to further consider and realign the Risk Register.

**COU.14.70 REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (COU/14/65)**

Council **considered** the report from Nominations and Governance Committee meeting held on 12 September 2014. The Vice-Chancellor **reported**:

1. that the process of appointing a Chancellor was nearing conclusion with the distinguished poet and author, Jackie Kay MBE, accepting an offer of the position in principle;
2. that, in a parallel development, the Committee had approved the proposal that Ms Kay be offered the position of Writer in Residence, which would enable the University to commission work in areas of academic and cultural interest and value to the University;
3. that a public announcement would be made once formal details had been concluded.

Council **resolved**:

1. that the new Ordinance 12 (University Secretary) and the revised Ordinance 13 (Other Officers) be adopted;
2. that Mike Burrows be appointed as a Pro-Chancellor;
3. that, subject to the conclusion of formalities, the appointment of Jackie Kay as Chancellor be confirmed.

**COU.14.71 PROCESS FOR PRIORITISATION OF CAPITAL BIDS (COU/14/66)**

Council **noted** the prioritisation of capital bids (which would be considered by Finance and Resources Committee once committee reforms were concluded).

**COU.14.72 USE OF UNIVERSITY SEAL (COU/14/67)**

Council **noted** a report setting out use of the University Seal since the previous Council meeting.

**COU.14.73 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS IN 2013/14**

Thursday 27 November 2014

Thursday 5 February 2015

Thursday 23 April 2015

Thursday 2 July 2015

(all meetings commencing at 2.00pm)